

MINUTES OF A HOCKHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 9TH JAN 2023

Attending were councillors, Bennett, Lambert (chair), Leech, Loft and Thomas, plus the clerk C Garrod and seven members of the public. After co-option Councillors Lloyd and Guppy joined the other councillors.

- 1) **Apologies for absence;** These had been received from Fabian Eagle (NCC).
- 2) **Declarations of interest;** Councillor Bennett as an allotment holder, Councillor Lambert as owner and landlord of the Eagle public house and Councillor Leech as tenant farmer at Little Hockham.
- 3) **Requests for dispensation;** None.
- 4) **To approve as accurate the minutes from 05/2/22;** these were unanimously approved.
- 5) **Councillor Co-option:** The two councillor vacancies had reached the co-option stage and the time period for applications completed. There were two vacancies and two applications. Each applicant explained some details of who they were and their interest in becoming councillors. It was agreed to co-opt both applicants, Donna Lloyd and Robin Guppy.
- 6) **Progress Report for Information:**
 - a) No quotes yet received for the tree work. The clerk explained that the issue with a 9-month timescale had been addressed and the other issues had a 15-month completion date.
 - b) Wretham Road Streetlight Credit note. A credit note had been received from Pearce and Kemp for the streetlight works with the cost of the hardware being reimbursed and an additional credit of £107.10. This was a total of £891.
 - c) Playing Field, no progress made yet, it was agreed to target the insurance renewal date for handover.
 - d) Wretham PC had held their own private meeting with MP Liz Truss, so it was agreed to try and set up a meeting for Hockham with pre-selected agreed questions. The clerk would contact Ms Truss's secretary.
- 7) **Public Participation Session.** The meeting was adjourned for this item.
- 8) **County and District Council Reports.** None
- 9) **Highways and Road Safety.** Councillor Thomas reported that the Watton Road village sign had been knocked off and had been reported. He would ask if the sign could be moved as it was very close to the road verge edge. Some signposts had signs of corrosion and would be reported.
- 10) **Planning Applications and Issue.** There were no outstanding applications. Councillor Bennett reported that an email sent about the Smithy Cottage conservation fence, wall and road sign issue had been sent by Councillor Cowen to the Head of Planning and the portfolio member for planning. The clerk had asked about the 5 property cul de sac rule but could not see it was a currently active rule. The chair and councillor Leech had attended a Local Plan and site submission meeting before Christmas and reported on the content. There was no update on the call for sites. Councillor Bennett agreed to look into a Neighbourhood Plan and report back.

- 11) Finance:** The clerk said that the current account was close to £13000. An estimation of £11500 for year-end was predicted.
After some discussion, it was agreed to apply for a £15000 precept for 23/24. This was to cover streetlight works to install LED lights of a “soft glow”. The scheme would get a quick payback due to estimated power price increases.
Agreed payments were the clerk’s salary for December at £125 this would be £139.40 due to an NI rebate. Self-adhesive bin stickers at £100, SLCC membership at £73, Pearce and Kemp January maintenance contract at £45.60 and an allotment water bill of £209. The clerk explained issues with Barclays Bank over mandate changes. Online banking would be progressed.
Npower was now taking direct debits but not providing invoices.
- 12) Allotment’s:** Councillor Guppy would assist with an allotment inspection in the spring aided by the clerk and councillor Bennett. Allotment holders would be advised. AWA water connection would cost in the region of £2500 so a bore hole would be investigated.
- 13) Footpaths and Rights of Way:** There had been some reports that hedges on the footpaths within the village were causing difficulties to wheelchair and pushchair users. The clerk would ask for in Touch to publish an article on this. The Parliament Lane overgrown plant issues from the summer, had not been resolved and the clerk would ask a resident of the status.
- 14) Village Litter Pick:** It was agreed to organise a litter pick to the Breckland Council guidelines. Councillor Bennett would investigate this and sort a date.
- 15) Defibrillator:** there had recently been an issue with accessing the defibrillator in the dark and issues over the location. A laminated location sticker had been put in the box. The light did not seem to have any power, and this would be investigated. A mask and glove pack had been replaced as it got wet.
- 16) Councillor Updates:** It was agreed the PC would buy some bedding plants and plant in the boxes on the village sign entrances.
- 17) Correspondence:** A letter had been received from a concerned resident regards verge damage at Home Farm Park, due to a parked car. The car had now been removed. Councillor Leech explained that there could be some intense short-term movements of pig rearing equipment, whilst the pig units were vacated on Little Hockham Lane.
- 18) Date of next meeting:** Monday 13th Feb 23